

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



CULTURE AND HERITAGE DESTINATIONS VENUES

Guidance for a phased Return



Department for

Communities

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Revision information

19 June 2021	First issue
26 June 2021	Removal of detail of reopening dates in section 1, with a reference to NI Direct instead
15 September 2021	Update of details in Section 4 in accordance with the new restrictions: Until regulations allow, all wet bars to remain closed and removal of preventing access to outdoor play.
22 April 2021	Update in line with current restrictions

This guidance has been developed by the Department. It is based upon advice developed by the Welsh Government and takes into account extra information contained in guidance produced by DCMS and Historic England entitled:

**'Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for working safely in heritage locations on reopening'.
It has benefitted from stakeholder comments on a draft version.**

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1. Introduction

This document offers high-level guidance for organisations in Northern Ireland that manage culture and heritage destinations and venues that are open to the public. These include museums, art galleries, libraries, archives, historic buildings, historic gardens, historic monuments, cinemas, concert halls, art centres and theatres.

Emerging successfully from lockdown requires a vigorous approach to finding common solutions that control and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 as part of a collective effort towards managing risk.

This guidance exists within a continuously changing legislative landscape and must be considered alongside existing general principles, guidelines and regulations (see list of relevant NI guidance documents below).

This guidance does not replace what is already available, but supplements that guidance with specific advice for the sector. This advice is not intended to be prescriptive. The Department recognises that measures taken will need to be appropriate, scalable and take into consideration the particular nature of each destination or venue. However, owners and managers must be pro-active in considering and implementing measures that will help protect staff, performers, volunteers, local communities and visitors.

Organisations' plans should be proportionate, should be reviewed regularly in line with government guidance, and must offer a careful, phased approach to reopening.

Organisations should also focus on creating agile solutions that can be paused or reversed in the event of changes in the public health position. Organisations need to be confident that reopening is supported by their own business case considerations, based on each individual set of circumstances.

Public confidence will be key in supporting a successful and commercially viable return to business. Plans for reopening will need to take public perceptions into account and a careful, coherent process of emerging from lockdown will be essential. A clear plan for communicating with the public will need to be considered, to provide them with confidence around the experience and welcome they will receive, precautions taken, and the changes that they will find from previous arrangements.

Due consideration will also need to be given to local communities in which your organisation exists and operates. Good communication and links with local communities will be key to increasing confidence and reassuring local residents that measures have been taken to minimise the spread of COVID-19.

We will continue to work with the sectors to identify where additional guidance may be helpful, especially with the phased easing of the restrictions, and will keep this guidance under review with revised versions being produced if required. This guidance therefore reflects a continuing conversation between the Department and the sector. It draws on key related pieces of guidance including that

on **Working Safely in the Visitor Economy**, and provides more specific guidance for relevant venues and destinations.

Organisations will need to ensure that they comply with NI Executive instructions and guidance, and will therefore need to keep abreast of Executive announcements. **nidirect** is the key source of information and is kept regularly updated as the Executive makes decisions on further opening of facilities and premises, rules and guidance on social distancing, and other matters.

If you have comments or suggestions on this guidance, please contact us at **HEDcentraladmin@communities-ni.gov.uk**, so that we can address your points in revisions as appropriate.

Key pieces of NI guidance

1. **Coronavirus Recovery Plan**
2. **Workplace Safety Guidelines and Social Distancing**
3. **Workplace Safety Guidance and Priority Sector List**
4. **Stay at home guidance**
5. **Businesses Working Through this Together guidance**
6. **Travelling safely (coronavirus): guidance for the public**
7. **Test, Trace, Protect support strategy**
8. **Working Safely in the Visitor Economy Guidance**

2. Coronavirus health regulations

Northern Ireland introduced guidance and regulations in March 2020 which required social distancing, a high degree of staying at home, and the closure of a wide range of businesses and premises. The regulations are unprecedented, but intended to help control the spread of the virus and ultimately to save lives. Over the last thirteen months there have been a number of changes to these regulations.

The regulations must be the prerequisite that informs all of our planning for reopening

culture and heritage destinations and venues. For example, travel restrictions and social distancing legislation will define how the public can access culture and heritage destinations and venues, and the ability of staff to travel to work.

The use of the guidance provided in Section 4 of this document, and in the Annexes, must be viewed in the context of these regulations. In short, organisations responsible for culture and heritage destinations must continue to comply with the law.

3. Developing a collaborative phased return for culture and heritage destinations and venues

Early engagement with representatives of the culture and heritage sector has been essential to start the planning of a phased reopening of our culture and heritage destinations and venues. Working together, we are identifying a basic framework for a phased return. Sectoral representatives have input to this guidance.

The timing and extent of resuming activity, and of reopening culture and heritage destinations and venues, will vary as we progress through the steps for moving out of lockdown. Due to the limitations posed by social distancing requirements, some destinations and venues will lend themselves to reopening and resuming business activities earlier than others.

Sections 4 and 5 of this document are intended to apply to all the destinations and venues relevant to the guidance. The annexes contain those considerations that are specific to each sector. The intention is not to repeat content from Sections 4 and 5 in the various annexes – so managers and organisations responsible for

destinations and venues need to consider both the relevant annex and the main body of text.

- Annex A Museums and art galleries
- Annex B Historical monuments and archaeological sites
- Annex C Historic buildings and historic gardens
- Annex D Public libraries
- Annex E Local archive services
- Annex F Arts venues, including concert halls and theatres
- Annex G Cinemas
- Annex H Guidance for Heritage and Conservation Specialists and their Employers/Clients

The guidance is based on the **Coronavirus Pathway out of Restrictions**. In making decisions, organisations should consider this framework, and especially the impact that their approaches to reopening will have on issues relating to equality, including the impact on vulnerable and marginalised groups.

4. Guidance for reopening of culture and heritage destinations and venues

The reopening of culture and heritage destinations and venues can only be possible when the coronavirus health regulations and associated guidelines allow. A summary of the latest regulations and accompanying guidelines and links are provided in Section 1. All managers of destinations and venues must comply with the regulations when making decisions about reopening.

This guidance should also be considered in the context of regulations and guidance in other areas of life where there are key interdependencies that will affect the way we move forward. These include restrictions on the need to self-isolate at home for individuals and households with symptoms of coronavirus, the need to adhere to social distancing measures and travel restrictions.

There will be other statutory requirements that may need to be followed as you prepare for reopening. Many alterations to structures, including listed buildings and scheduled monuments, require statutory permissions and consents for instance.

There is further information on these issues in Annex B and Annex C.

This section provides advice and guidance that is intended to assist organisations and managers in their planning and preparation for the future. They cannot be prescriptive and need to be appropriate to the nature of the destination or venue. For example, measures taken to comply with the regulations and with public health and safety will be very different for a large visitor destination such as the Ulster Museum and for a small, unstaffed and outdoor prehistoric monument that does not have any developed infrastructure, such as public toilets or a visitor centre, such as the Giant's Ring. There are also very different considerations if a destination is predominantly outdoors compared to indoors, since the scientific evidence shows that the spread of the virus is much less when outdoors.

4.1. General considerations

Working within public health regulations and guidelines

- All activity should always be consistent with the government regulations and guidance regarding health, social distancing and hygiene.

Planning and preparing buildings for reopening

- Plans should be proportionate, should be reviewed regularly, alongside changes in government guidance and must offer a careful, phased approach to reopening. Organisations should also focus on creating agile solutions that can be paused or rapidly reversed in the event of further coronavirus outbreaks
- As part of the planning for reopening, a number of physical interventions might be required in order to implement many of the measures listed in Sections 4.2 - 4.5
- Ensure statutory health and safety buildings checks are up to date prior to reopening for staff or visitors (e.g. legionella, electrical testing)
- Deep clean all public and workforce areas prior to opening and implement revised and enhanced cleaning regimes and protocols
- Appropriate risk assessments for performers, staff and visitors should be carried out
- Priority should be given to ventilation, the more fresh air that can be brought into a room the quicker airborne viruses such as covid-19 can be removed.

Equality and diversity

- You must consider the rights of those with protected characteristics and how they can continue to safely access your venue / services
- Remember that some people do not have internet access. You should make provision for them to be able to make bookings / enquiries offline

Timetable for reopening

- Activities and venues should only reopen or restart in line with the five steps of the published roadmap, in accordance with any relevant easing of the restrictions in the regulations, and when an organisation feels it is safe to do so
- When planning for any reopening, you will need to consider any notice periods or other arrangements required for furloughed or redeployed staff to return to work

Test, Trace, Protect

- **The NI Test, Trace, Protect** strategy exists to enhance health surveillance in the community, undertake effective and extensive contact tracing, and support people to self-isolate where required to do so

Communications

- Public confidence will be key to supporting a successful and commercially viable return to business, and good communications can help to create this. Due consideration will also need to be given to local communities in which the organisation exists and operates. This is considered in more detail in Section 5

Review

- Ensure that all policies and measures are reviewed regularly (at least weekly) and particularly in light of changes to government guidance, lessons learned and any other examples of best practice elsewhere

On-site bars, restaurants, catering and non-essential retail

- Until the regulations allow, all indoor hospitality must remain closed
- If there is capacity and resource to offer eat in or takeaway food and drinks, then hot and cold food may be served. However, you will need to consider appropriate hygiene and toilet facilities and you must ensure that appropriate social distancing is maintained at all times. You should also consider avoiding or limiting cash transactions
- You should consider increasing litter bins to manage the litter caused with takeaway food.

Costs of reopening

- The NI Executive recognises that part of the decision making on when to reopen for all sites will centre on the economic viability of doing so
- It will be for each organisation to determine whether it is right for them to reopen at a given time

Security

- You should consider the security implications of any changes you intend to make to your operations and practices in response to COVID-19, as any revisions may present new or altered security risks or issues with accessibility which may need mitigations
- Whilst the risk to health from COVID-19 is at the forefront of everyone's minds, it is essential that businesses and other organisations remain cognisant of all risks that may impact their business as they look to adjust their operations, ensuring that existing risk assessments

are proactively adapted to support and complement other changes

- Organisations should also think about whether there is potentially a heightened risk of theft and trespass (based on the presumption or reality that there are empty rooms or buildings or fewer staff and systems) or anti-social behaviour and consider referencing these issues in their risk assessment

4.2. Thinking about risk

There is guidance on approach to risk, and Risk Assessments, in the **Working Safely in the Visitor Economy guidance**. This section highlights some specific issues you may need to consider in culture and heritage venues and destinations.

Risk assessment is about identifying in a timely fashion sensible measures to control the risks in your workplace and the service you provide. The development of a COVID-19 risk assessment will help decide whether all necessary issues have been addressed. The risk assessment will need to be reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains relevant and appropriate under changing circumstances. Risk assessments must reflect the current legislation and guidance.

When thinking about COVID-19 related risk, key principles include:

- considering possible harms to both the physical and mental health of staff, performers, volunteers and visitors;
- considering the age and clinical vulnerability of people in your workforce;
- considering the minimum safe levels of staffing - for example to maintain the specific coronavirus protocols, or in the

event of a member of staff or volunteer becoming unwell, or needing to isolate (this may affect visitor capacity on site);

- analysing work tasks and, where the risk of injury is naturally higher, considering postponement of these, so as to minimise the need for first aid involvement and reduce the strain on the NHS
- arrangements on staffed sites in the event of someone becoming unwell or injured whilst on the premises - including first aid arrangements;
- considering all touch points and assessing if these can be removed, protected or that they become part of an enhanced cleaning regime;
- minimising the need for work-related journeys and face-to-face contact;
- keeping risk assessments as 'live' documents which are regularly reviewed;
- recognising that communication, training, and appropriate equipment are significant factors in helping to reduce risk

4.3. Employees and protecting people at work

It is a legal requirement that all reasonable actions will have been taken in order to minimise transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace. The Department for the Economy has produced guidance on **Working Safely in the Visitor Economy** which provides useful information on risk assessments, personal protective equipment, social distancing, visitors, queuing and cleaning. This will be updated as required.

All reasonable measures must be taken to maintain the required social distance between individuals in the workplace. The guidance on

the visitor economy will help when considering the measures needed to reduce infection transmission rates at work.

The guidance on protecting people at work applies equally to paid employees and those who are volunteering.

When using this guidance, employers need to be aware of the requirement to treat everyone in your workplace equally. In particular employers need to be mindful of the particular needs of different groups of workers or individuals and that it is breaking the law to discriminate, directly or indirectly, against anyone because of a protected characteristic such as age, sex or disability.

4.4. Managing visitors

The measures that need to be implemented for managing visitors need to be proportionate, and will depend on the nature and size of the site. Some suggestions are set out below.

Issues relating to the safe management of visitors should be identified in individual risk assessments. In some cases it might be possible to consider approaches adopted by other cultural venues that are open in the area. This would ensure that there is consistency of approach, identify the potential for partnership working, and build greater confidence amongst visitors.

Indoor spaces

You should consider:

- assessing spaces, to understand how many people can be safely accommodated in any space at any one time while observing social distancing;

- ventilation, letting fresh air into indoor spaces can help remove air with virus particles and prevent the spread of covid-19;
- restricting capacity, especially in first phase of reopening, to a level that you know the site can accommodate comfortably while observing social distancing measures. Regularly review the capacity restrictions;
- arrangements for maintaining social distancing. For example this may be developing a one way system, with appropriate signage, identifying key pinch and gathering points and deciding how these will be managed. It may be that you need to be quite radical in changing the way visitors have traditionally moved around your buildings;
- ensuring any changes to entries, exit and queue management take into account reasonable adjustments for those who need them, including disabled customers;
- using signage, barriers and floor markings to assist adherence to social distancing rules, including at customer service desks, ticketing desks, shops and in galleries etc;
- introducing 'stop and wait' signs where appropriate;
- introducing face covering signs where appropriate;
- placing staff close to key pinch and gathering points to oversee the movement of visitors through these areas (e.g. narrow stairways / passageways which need to be used in both directions) - giving special consideration for those with disabilities including visual impairment; if it is not possible to maintain the required social distancing, then consider closing off areas;
- reminding visitors who are accompanied by children that they are responsible for supervising them at all times;
- introducing timed slots for entry which are available online, or accepting visitors by appointment only (remembering to set up alternative provision for those without internet access);
- introducing barriers or Perspex screens at visitor reception areas, payment counters etc and in other areas of the building if appropriate, to minimise social interaction;
- introducing contactless payment at till points, or at least card payment, to avoid handling cash;
- limiting visitor seating, while recognising that some visitors have access needs and may need to rest;
- using posters and announcements to remind visitors to take individual responsibility to social distance and wash their hands often;
- limiting access and entry points to improve the management of the flow of visitors; have clearly marked "entrance and exit" points throughout the site where possible;
- leaving internal doors open when it is safe to do so (for example subject to fire safety arrangements), so that visitors can see others at all times; this has the added benefit of limiting multiple visitors touching the same surface such as door handles (it is recognised that this may not be possible where there is a need to regulate temperature / environmental conditions for delicate museum collections);
- removing any interactive objects or placing a sign to prohibit use (in due course, it might be possible to consider installing hand sanitising stations

near these areas for safer usage and introducing cleaning protocols);

- consider whether you need to use audio guides and, if so, cleaning audio guides (following the relevant cleaning guidance) between users and staff handling the equipment will need to be appropriately protected;
- removing paper marketing material and other paper resources such as colouring-in pages and pencils, to reduce the risk of cross-contamination;
- limiting the use of lifts - for example to those with push chairs or to people with mobility / health issues. Where a lift is used, consider setting a new maximum capacity - for example a one-person limit (or two if a carer is required), with a regular cleaning protocol;
- check whether you need to service or adjust ventilation systems, for example, so that they do not automatically reduce ventilation levels due to lower than normal occupancy levels. Most air conditioning systems do not need adjustment, however where systems serve multiple buildings, or you are unsure, advice should be sought from your heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) engineers or advisers. For building services advice, particularly around ventilation of buildings both in use and when returning to buildings which have been closed, please see advice from the **Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers**.

There will be a need to follow government guidance with regard to group visits, guided tours and events and other public programmes such as schools programmes, family learning and events. These are unlikely to be possible

during the early phases of reopening, and thereafter the number of participants will need to be limited. All activities will need to be assessed for risk and viability in line with public health guidance.

Outdoor spaces

You should consider:

- car parking arrangements - for example, the management of potential queues at charging points and pedestrian entrance and exit points from the car park, perhaps using signage and distance markers;
- working with your local authority on the impact of queueing and car parking on the local area;
- minimising risk at car park pay points - for example by the use of clear signage, using pay by mobile phone, and/or the use of hand sanitising stations;
- spacing of outdoor benches / picnic tables - to allow a minimum buffer of sufficient distance between edges of tables / benches; frequent cleaning of surfaces when benches / tables are vacated;
- increasing the widths of pathways to improve pedestrian foot flow with the mowing of grassed verges. Developing one-way systems where possible;
- addressing the potential for increased litter ensuring appropriate action

4.5. Cleaning and hygiene arrangements

Introduce cleaning/hygiene protocols that are easily understood by all staff and contractors.

Working Safely in the Visitor Economy

provides detailed advice on cleaning and hygiene arrangements.

4.6. Toilet facilities

With specific regards to toilet facilities consideration should be given to:

- Using signs and posters to build awareness of good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency, avoid touching your face and to cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely, or into your arm if a tissue is not available;
- Providing regular reminders and signage to maintain hygiene standards;
- Providing hand sanitiser in multiple locations in addition to washrooms;
- Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and social distancing is achieved as much as possible;
- Enhancing cleaning for busy areas and common touch points;
- Special care should be taken for cleaning of portable toilets;
- Considering use of social distance marking for other common areas such

as toilets, showers, lockers and changing rooms and in any other areas where queues typically form;

- Providing more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection;
- Providing hand drying facilities - either paper towels or electrical dryers

4.7. Checklist

- ✓ All activity should consistent with Government Regulations
- ✓ Ventilation should be prioritised indoors
- ✓ Face coverings should be worn in line with regulations
- ✓ Reduce capacity to allow social distancing
- ✓ Consider pre-bookings to limit capacity
- ✓ Appropriate signage to encourage social distancing and face coverings

5. Effective communications

Visitor perception surveys are being undertaken by many organisations; initial findings suggest that visitors may be apprehensive about returning to visit attractions. In particular, people may feel anxious about public gatherings, especially indoors, for a long period of time. Consequently, public confidence will be key to supporting a successful and commercially viable return to business, and good communications can help to create this.

Due consideration will also need to be given to local communities in which the organisation exists and operates. Local people may be anxious about visitors being drawn to a particular area. Consequently, good communication and links with local communities will be key to increasing reassurance and confidence in the preparations that have been implemented to minimise the risk of spreading the disease.

The experience that visitors will have when visiting a site or venue will be different to the pre-Covid period and visitors' expectations will need to be managed. For many organisations, they will need to balance the welcoming of sufficient visitors to make opening commercially viable, whilst also adhering to NI Executive regulations and guidance on social distancing and other measures.

If possible, organisations should publish a clear statement detailing their plans to reopen safely and the steps they are taking to reduce the potential for infection transmission. This should include any new opening times and any changes to how people can safely access their venue.

Notices welcoming visitors should be positive and engaging, and should explain the additional steps being taken to ensure the venue is a safe environment which has appropriate cleaning and hygiene protocols in place. The notices should also explain how visitors can play their part in keeping the venue safe for them and for others.

For employees, you could consider:

- engaging with employees directly and also through trade unions to develop and agree any changes in working arrangements;
- introducing re-induction sessions for employees and developing tool box talks (short documented talks with staff on any changes to work process);
- providing clear and regular communication to improve understanding and consistency of how new ways of working are applied;
- providing training materials on new procedures (consider how these materials are delivered, including online to maintain social distancing between workers);

- focusing on the importance of mental health at times of uncertainty;
- ensuring a clear reporting mechanism to feedback concerns or issues.

For visitors, you could consider:

- emphasising that visitor and staff safety is the priority;
- communicating through social media, websites and email to help them prepare for their visit - what to expect, what health precautions and social distancing measures have been put in place, what is open and closed, queuing, reduced capacity, providing visitors with information about the changed visitor experience e.g. no interactive interpretations;
- promoting pre-booking requirements, entry systems or online free tickets or ticket purchases (including offline options for those with no internet access);
- informing visitors of any changes to booking procedures for those with protected characteristics or clinically vulnerable (how you will assist disabled people, the elderly and pregnant women to continue to access venues in a safe way, for example, avoiding the need for them to stand in a queue);
- the use of simple, clear and accessible messaging to explain guidelines using images and clear language may be required

For local communities, you could consider:

- finding out whether your local community is apprehensive about visitor attractions reopening and the associated increase in the number of people travelling to the area;
- working closely with local communities to develop a strategy to not only inform the community of your plans to reopen, but to provide reassurance that additional precautions are being taken;
- explaining what arrangements are in place for monitoring visitor numbers and behaviours and what arrangements are in place for reversing a decision to open if necessary;
- working collaboratively with other culture and heritage destinations in your area to send out co-ordinated communications to ensure that the same messages are being used to provide reassurance

If contractors are working at your site it is important that:

- you engage with them in advance of their visit to the building or site. They will need to complete a risk assessment for their access and activities and communicate these to you as the site/building operator/user

Annex A - Museums and art galleries

This advice applies to museums, galleries and other visual arts venues, and any other organisation or venue operating as exhibitors and collectors. The Department recognises that museums and galleries vary significantly in size and operation and this will contribute to decisions on when it is appropriate to reopen or resume some activities.

The general principles outlined in Sections 1-5 of this document apply to this sector.

Those Museums and galleries which are physically larger may find it easier to open and are actively encouraged to support small independent organisations by sharing best practice and learning. Additionally the NI Museums Council is currently hosting a group of museum managers who are examining the challenges and sharing best practice and knowledge.

Planning for re-opening

Museums and galleries face a variety of challenges to re-open safely for the workforce and the public. Most, if not all, will have to make significant physical and operational changes. This will change how museums and galleries provide entry and how visitors move around buildings and external grounds in order to meet the guidance on social distancing. These changes may include limiting entry, perhaps using timed, bookable slots, and ensuring that visitors move through galleries

following clearly determined routes. It may mean that some exhibition areas will need to remain closed where safe social distancing can't be implemented.

Re-opening will require changes to previous ways of working. Every organisation should develop specific re-opening plans to address their needs in line with general regulations, guidance and advice.

Consideration should be given to the role of volunteers. Many museums have small teams of staff and rely on volunteers. Many of these are older and/or clinically vulnerable and therefore may be restricted under government guidance, and may not feel comfortable about continuing their involvement at this time or may wish to have an adapted role away from front of house duties.

Special considerations

In addition to the list of considerations provided in Sections 4 and 5, there are some specific considerations relevant to the museum and galleries sector.

Managing galleries and visitor access. Issues to consider include:

- preparing galleries by removing or limiting access to manual interactives and interactive displays, and reviewing other high 'touch point' areas;

- minimising or removing public handling of collections, and continuing to assess and revise your approach as restrictions ease;
- considering how your workforce can actively support visitor experiences within social distancing guidelines. Where possible, planning workforce location points for clear sight lines, supporting visitor movement around the galleries;
- planning for managing visitors in wet weather;
- exploring ways of encouraging a positive experience for visitors, so that you do not lose opportunities or the ethos of positive engagement despite the restrictions

Public programmes and activities. Issues to consider include:

- when to reintroduce learning opportunities, both facilitated and self-led. Museums are encouraged to continue to work with schools and community groups on-line, and will need to consider how to adapt provision in future roadmap phases so as to be able to continue to comply with national guidance;
- when to reintroduce school programmes and visits. This will require working closely with schools and education services and must always be in line with Executive guidelines;
- when and how to reintroduce events and major new exhibitions. It is unlikely that these will be possible in the early stages of reopening unless museums and galleries can fully comply with guidance in doing so;
- when to restart activities that involve larger gatherings. This will need to be assessed in line with restrictions on mass gatherings. Consideration could be given to offering different experiences digitally until this is feasible;

- when to restart venue hire and other commercial activity. In each case this would need to be assessed and comply with guidance

Working with collections and objects

Museums and galleries will need to review how they can safely manage, move and display collections both within their own museums and between museums. These protocols should be reviewed regularly as the situation eases to allow a return to more access to objects and increased handling when it is safe to do so. There will also be a need to train staff on any new safety procedures for working with collections and archives to minimise touch transmission.

When handling collection items and their packaging, you will need to consider:

- social distancing and hand washing arrangements before and after handling collections;
- use of disposable plastic gloves;
- use of non-medical grade face mask or face covering to avoid aerosol contamination of collection items;
- removal and disposal of PPE in accordance with your employer's protocols

Where possible, workflows should be adjusted to ensure that the number of separate individuals handling collections is kept to a minimum. Where this is not possible, a quarantine procedure should be implemented to minimise the risk of transmission.

The virus survives for longer on metal and hard smooth surfaces such as glazed ceramics and plastics than on porous surfaces like paper and textiles. There is a greater risk of transfer

from smooth surfaces than highly textured surfaces such as textiles but textured surfaces are harder to clean.

Cleaning or treatment of objects should only be undertaken after seeking advice from a conservator. Consider how a quarantine protocol could help in this area. Quarantine periods will differ across a range of materials and should be kept under review and determined by the latest scientific evidence and advice relating to the virulence of the virus on surfaces. Some evidence suggests that the virus will persist longer at temperatures below room temperature and where humidity levels are low. However, in normal humidity and temperature ranges (40 - 60%; 16 - 22C), **a quarantine period of 72 hours is recommended** based on UK government advice on handling goods, clothing and merchandise in retail situations. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches#shops-7-3>

Non-heritage surfaces in collections or other spaces that are used to work on collections can be cleaned using disinfection methods that can be well-controlled e.g. anti-bacterial wipes. This approach should also be adopted with non-heritage doorknobs, handrails etc within the same spaces. Handling equipment (e.g. trolleys) can also be cleaned in this way.

Receiving collections, archives and donations

Museums and galleries may also have to adapt how they collect and process new material, which should include safety guidance for quarantining objects being

donated and/or moved. Advice suggests a quarantine period of 72 hours for collections and archives received – see link provided above. Materials should be clearly date marked and stored in a separate location or in sealed containers.

When receiving collections consideration should be given to the following:

- From organisations: Covid-secure protocols and risk assessment for handling and dispatching collections;
- From individuals: it is recommended that items received from individuals should be quarantined (see above);
- From transport companies: Covid-secure protocols and risk assessment for handling and dispatching collections;
- Transport companies may choose only to work with organisations that have Covid-secure risk assessments for handling and dispatching collections;
- Photo-capture to record deliveries/ collection of material;
- Electronic exchange and signature of essential paperwork if not available digitally;
- Disinfection of packing crates/boxes with anti-bacterial wipes;
- Disinfection of handling equipment such as trolleys with anti-bacterial wipes;
- Quarantine (see above);
- Safe storage or disposal of packing material: if these items are quarantined (see above), these materials will not require any further cleaning

Museums receiving archives should also refer to Annex E.

Useful links

These links are provided as useful information only, and may refer to guidance from a range of jurisdictions. You should always consider any information contained in these links within the context of NI Executive and PHA Guidance.

<https://www.museumsassociation.org/home>

<https://icon.org.uk/news/waking-up-collections-a-post-lockdown-guide>

<https://www.aim-museums.co.uk/coronavirus-resources/>

<https://www.cac-accr.ca/covid-19/>
<https://icom.museum/en/news/museums-and-end-of-lockdown-ensuring-the-safety-of-the-public-and-staff/>

<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/museum-reopening-table>

<https://www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/resources/nmdc-responses-and-position-statements/good-practice-guidance-museum-reopening/>

<https://www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/news>

Annex B - Historic Monuments and Archaeological Sites

The general principles in Sections 1-5 in this document apply to this sector. In addition, common to all historic monuments and archaeological sites is the likelihood that the majority will enjoy some form of statutory protection - either as listed buildings and/or scheduled monuments, or through controls around development and other works.

Where physical alterations are necessary at a listed building or scheduled monument, listed building consent (LBC) or scheduled monument consent (SMC) will generally be required. In other instances separate statutory controls exist around alterations to an historic monument or an archaeological site. However, it should be possible to allow such heritage sites to function safely in response to COVID-19, in ways that will not require consent or damage to the sites.

Organisations considering works to a scheduled monument (temporary or otherwise) should contact **the Historic Environment Division of DfC**, where staff will be able to provide more advice, for example by suggesting ways in which COVID-19 mitigation measures might be achieved without the need for consent.

Planning for re-opening

As the restrictions are further eased many outdoor sites and monuments will find it easier to comply with the regulations. However, there will be particular challenges at some larger sites, with confined spaces and narrow staircases where it may be difficult to enforce social distancing. Therefore, consideration will need to be given to restricting access or to closing some elements of sites even if other areas of a particular site have been reopened.

Larger monuments, such as large medieval stone castles and those sites with indoor visitor centres, will be more difficult to reopen without significant planning and arrangements in place in order to comply with the regulations.

Public events programmes and education visits should not be reintroduced in the early stages of reopening unless sites can fully comply with all NI Executive guidance.

Special considerations

In addition to the list of considerations provided in Sections 4 and 5, there are some specific considerations relevant to those who manage historic monuments and archaeological sites.

In many cases it will be possible to find ways in which the safe movement of staff and visitors in historic monuments and archaeological sites can be achieved without compromising their safety or damaging historic fabric or below ground archaeology - and so avoiding the need for scheduled monument consent, listed building consent, or other statutory permissions.

Historic monuments and archaeological sites, including ruined structures, are more likely to have constrained spaces such as small rooms, narrow staircases and limited entrance or exit points. A particular challenge may be the number of spaces that can only be accessed using steep, narrow and uneven stairs, and often require handrails or ropes that can't be cleaned on a regular basis

Responses need to be proportionate to the type of site, the likely number of visitors and the nature of the likely risks; so for instance an isolated archaeological site or remote historic structure is unlikely to need any specific signage or other measures.

Staff will need to be briefed, and regularly reminded, about special measures in place and asked to politely point these out to any visitor who may have forgotten or overlooked them. When dealing with historic monuments and archaeological sites that are protected, there is a need to consider:

- installing signage, screens and barriers in a sensitive way which does not cause damage to a historic structure or below ground archaeology;
- ensuring that markings are done in a way which does not cause lasting damage to a historic monument or archaeological site;
- limiting the number of people entering some narrow or small spaces by staggering entrance and exit times, especially where there is plenty of space for socially-distanced queues to be created;
- closing off areas of the monument that can only be accessed by narrow passages or stairways - in particular those that require the use of handrails and ropes that will be challenging to keep clean

Useful links

These links are being provided as useful information only, and may refer to guidance produced outside of Northern Ireland. You should always consider any information contained in these links within the context of NI legislation and guidance.

Guidance on the reopening of NI outdoor recreation sites.

Annex C - Historic Buildings and Historic Gardens

This additional advice applies to historic houses, historic places of worship and historic parks and gardens that are open to the public.

Specific advice for owners and occupiers of historic buildings that are solely private residences is not provided here, as it is assumed that no specific measures will need to be taken beyond the general advice for the public issued by the government.

It is especially important that the cleaning and disinfecting processes and regimes for historic buildings and structures are given additional consideration compared to modern buildings. This is because some historic surfaces are vulnerable to damage through inappropriate cleaning, meaning that the surfaces that staff and visitors may come into contact with, such as staircase handrails, may be damaged by certain chemicals (concentrated bleach being one). So consider alternative approaches that will achieve the same results; eg leaving an appropriate period of time before the area is accessed again (likely to be particularly relevant for some places of worship), using appropriate cleaning materials, or temporary non-damaging covers that can be put over the sensitive surfaces which can then be subject to standard cleaning regimes. Historic England has **specific advice**.

The Department recognises that historic houses and historic parks and gardens vary significantly in size and operation.

The general principles in Sections 1-5 in this document apply to this sector, although it is recognised that there are some specific issues to consider when planning for reopening. In particular, common to all historic buildings, historic places of worship and historic gardens is the likelihood that the majority will enjoy some form of statutory protection - either as listed buildings, scheduled monuments or registered historic parks and gardens.

Where physical alterations are necessary that affect a listed building or scheduled monument, listed building consent (LBC) or scheduled monument consent (SMC) will generally be required. However, it should be possible to allow heritage sites to function safely in response to COVID-19, in ways that will not require consent.

If an operator is in any doubt about whether consent or permission are required, they are strongly advised to discuss the situation with the local planning authority, or with **the Historic Environment Division of DfC** in relation to SMCs.

Businesses operating in historic premises

A wide range of businesses operate in historic premises, including retail, care homes, catering, private tours, accommodation, weddings, concerts, and film and TV production. They will need to find solutions specific to their business that will achieve a safe and functional environment for staff and visitors/guests or customers and complies with NI Executive regulations and guidance.

In relation to businesses operating in historic premises, the same kind of challenges regarding constrained spaces are likely to apply. **NI guidance on retail businesses should also be followed** but paying particular attention to the fact that older buildings may have a more complex layout, and that managing the flow of visitors and/or customers may therefore be a little more complicated or require a non-standard approach (such as temporarily abandoning managing visitors through guided groups, or implementing one-way systems). The business will need to think about restricting numbers, and their contingency for avoiding overcrowding within, at and near to the property. In offices in listed buildings, particular attention is likely to be necessary to the most effective ways of regularly cleaning any **sensitive historic surfaces without causing lasting** damage to them.

Planning for re-opening

The challenges in respect of re-opening will vary according to the nature of the site and its operation. For example, it will normally be easier to comply with regulations in open, outdoor spaces, so re-opening gardens and

grounds could in most instances reasonably precede opening indoor spaces. However, even here, consideration will need to be given to how visitor numbers are managed, and to the way visitors move through the site. Some historic gardens for example may feature small spaces or narrow pathways.

Many houses, historic places of worship and gardens open to the public have small teams of staff and rely on volunteers (or, in the case of privately owned property, on family members). Many of these are older and/or clinically vulnerable and therefore may be restricted under government guidance, and may not feel comfortable about continuing their involvement with the site at this time.

Larger properties or those which are not also in use as private homes may find it easier to open and may be able to support small independent organisations by sharing best practice and learning.

All destinations will need to consider how best to communicate operational changes to visitors including that not all facilities or all elements of the experience will be open. Where possible, destinations should take the opportunity to communicate to visitors prior to them visiting the site and to reinforce messaging on arrival / on site (see also Section 5).

Special considerations

Many of the suggested measures detailed in Sections 4 and 5 will be relevant when considering re-opening historic buildings, historic places of worship and historic gardens. The sub-sections below consider some issues that are particularly relevant to these historic places.

In many cases it will be possible to find ways in which the safe movement of staff and visitors in historic places can be achieved without compromising their safety or damaging historic fabric, so avoiding the need for listed building consent. This may mean requiring different routes around sites, the erection of temporary barriers and regular, very visible, signs or other reminders.

Historic buildings, including historic places of worship or ruined structures, are more likely to have constrained spaces such as small rooms, narrow staircases and limited entrance or exit points. A particular challenge may be the number of spaces that can only be accessed using steep narrow and uneven stairs, and often require handrails or ropes that can't be cleaned on a regular basis.

Staff will need to be briefed, and regularly reminded, about special measures in place and asked to politely point these out to any visitor who may have forgotten or overlooked them.

Responses need to be proportionate to the type of site, the likely number of visitors and the nature of the likely risks.

When adapting buildings that are protected, there is a need to consider:

- installing signage, screens and barriers in a sensitive way which does not cause damage to a historic building or an archaeological site (Historic England has produced **web guidance** on free-standing emergency exit signage which could be easily adapted to COVID-19 related signs);
- ensuring that markings are done in a way which does not cause lasting damage to a historic building;
- avoiding attaching any signage to historic wall coverings, textiles or furnishings;
- taking care with cleaning regimes because some historic surfaces are vulnerable to damage through inappropriate cleaning - for example staircase handrails may be damaged by certain chemicals (such as concentrated bleach);
- using temporary non-damaging covers that can be put over sensitive surfaces which can then be subject to standard cleaning regimes;
- liaising with the local planning authority or HED as to whether Listed Building Consent or Scheduled Monument Consent is required

Historic Houses

Re-opening houses themselves to the public is likely to entail significant operational changes and new ways of working.

- Arrangements to houses that are part occupied or used as private residences. The issues may be different for houses (such as those in the care of the National Trust) where visitors do not have access to parts of the property that are also occupied, and for private houses which have traditionally allowed access to parts of the property that remain in daily use. It is likely that in the latter case, re-opening will be neither possible nor desirable for some time;
- Arrangements for visitor access and movement around the property - see also section 4. This might be particularly challenging for some historic houses;
- The need for greater use of advance booking, and admission by appointment, making it easier to manage visitor

- numbers and to hold contact details which will support track and trace activity;
- Where visitors attend in groups or as part of guided tours, compliance with social distancing measures will be challenging. Where more limited access experiences are offered (such as bookable behind the scenes tours for very restricted numbers) there may be more scope to re-open on that limited basis;
 - Consideration will also need to be given to the accessible spaces themselves - confined areas or those with restricted entry points may have to remain closed, and there may need to be greater stress on clearly determined routes;
 - Limiting the number of people entering some narrow or small spaces by staggering entrance and exit times, especially where there is plenty of space for socially-distanced queues to be created;
 - Closing off areas of the building that can only be accessed by narrow passages or stairways - in particular those that require the use of handrails and ropes that will be challenging to keep clean;
 - Re-opening for events is unlikely to be possible until a later stage of emerging from lockdown. Organisations should check government guidance on holding events, weddings, wakes and other gatherings prior to agreeing to any bookings;
 - You will also need to consider how the public can safely access toilet facilities, and the provision of hand washing facilities/hand sanitiser, maintaining social distancing within such facilities and regular effective cleaning of such facilities

In many cases historic houses will have collections of objects and furniture that will require specific consideration - in particular

handling by both employees and by visitors. For handling collections / working with objects in a Historic Houses context, you should refer to guidance in Annex A on museums and their collections.

HMRC requirements for conditional exemption

As a temporary measure, homeowners will not be considered to have broken their agreement with HMRC if they are an owner of a heritage property who closes it, or delays **its opening late July 2021**.

When **government advice** changes, it is expected that properties will be open later in the year to make up for any lost days, if possible.

Historic parks and gardens

For historic parks and gardens that are open to the public, many of the issues associated with re-opening will be similar to those of other organisations who manage open spaces that are used by the public for outdoor exercise and recreation. **NI guidance is available for managers of outdoor natural and cultural sites for outdoor recreation.**

A number of the measures detailed in Section 4 should be considered prior to opening gardens, such as introducing a booking system to manage numbers and one-way systems - in particular those measures in Section 4.4 associated with outdoor spaces.

Specific consideration needs to be given to any proposed physical interventions given that the majority of sites are on the NI Register of Historic Parks and Gardens and may contain scheduled and/or listed structures and

features and special consent may be required. Some specific issues to consider when opening historic gardens include:

- creating new visitor routes and one-way systems, to aid social distancing. Ideally these should be temporary and fully reversible, such as creating new mown paths in grassland;
- designing routes carefully to avoid going over archaeological features or earthworks, or damaging garden planting or features;
- if temporary visitor seating is needed next to these new routes, then these should also be placed carefully in relation to garden or archaeological features;
- monitoring the use of new routes - closing them off and creating new ones if visitor erosion becomes a problem.

Historic places of worship

This section is specifically concerned with those former places of worship that are no longer primarily used for religious worship and are now maintained as historic buildings and heritage attractions, albeit that some also serve as places for private prayer and contemplation. For places of worship that are still in active use, please refer to advice from your own denomination, while being cognisant of the heritage as well as the ecclesiastical importance of these places.

Many places of worship are important heritage attractions due to their historical, architectural and art historical interest.

They are mostly supported by a large force of volunteers who undertake essential cleaning, maintenance, repair, security, administration and visitor welcome duties. Reopening should be seen as an opportunity to engage visitors in the longer-term future of these buildings. Research shows that people have become much more conscious of the value of their local heritage during the lockdown and every opportunity should be used to build on this as we welcome people back.

In addition to the list of considerations provided in Sections 4 and 5, there are some specific considerations relevant to those who manage historic places of worship.

These include:

- Volunteering arrangements - helping volunteers feel safe and comfortable with the new arrangements, including making allowances for shielding arrangements;
- The need for specific training to support staff and volunteers;
- Historic places of worship often employ key-holder arrangements. If visitors need to obtain a key to gain access, you should make arrangements for the safe handover and return of the key whilst observing social distancing. You should also consider implementing quarantine or cleaning regimes to ensure there is no risk of viral transfer on the key

Annex D - Libraries

This additional advice applies to public libraries, and to private libraries that are open to the public. The general principles in Sections 1-5 in this document apply to this sector, although there are also some specific issues that need to be considered.

Planning for resuming library services

As restrictions are eased, consideration can be given to re-opening both public and independent Libraries.

It is acknowledged that there is a vast range of libraries across all the library networks, and that their differing geographical and physical locations will require individual consideration in respect of re-opening. Some sites will be able to manage social distancing with minimal changes, while others with narrow corridors, shared premises or multiple floors will face other challenges.

Therefore, it is anticipated that the re-opening of library sites will be undertaken as a phased approach. In respect to public libraries, decisions in relation to this will be made by Libraries NI across their 96 branch libraries. These decisions will be made in line with NI Executive decisions and Public Health Agency guidance.

Libraries constitute an extensive network of shared public spaces, free at the point of access with dedicated and professional staff

who are committed to providing help and support to assist people, no matter what their background or circumstances, to access knowledge, information and ideas, thereby opening up a world of opportunities for everyone. Libraries are a valued and trusted resource at the heart of communities, providing space and opportunities to learn and to connect and they are held in high regard by the public. It is therefore essential that we proceed with re-opening Libraries where it is safe to do so.

It is also recognised that staff and public health and wellbeing should be the primary consideration in the provision of any service.

Libraries should also take note of the guidance provided by **Libraries Connected**.

Special considerations

In addition to the list of considerations provided in Sections 4 and 5, there are some specific considerations relevant to public libraries.

Cleaning and hygiene arrangements:

- In line with international experience of restoring library services following the easing of lock down, we recommend a quarantine period of 72 hours for physical lending materials;
- It is recommended that returned materials should be stored away from public areas and appropriately marked to ensure the quarantine period is adhered to;

- Resources should be provided to ensure computers can be disinfected before and after each use;
- Hand sanitiser should be placed in appropriate areas of libraries;
- Guidance on toilet facilities has been provided earlier in this document (Section 4.6). Cleaning and hygiene arrangements should be considered in detail. It will be essential to ensure risk assessments are in place, alongside guidelines for new procedures (for staff and the public) and planning any training required

Staffing:

- Safe staffing levels will need to be considered. The requirement to take all reasonable measures to ensure an adequate social distance is maintained between persons in line with social distancing guidance (refer to Section 1);
- Consider altering shift patterns to reduce the number of staff in the library at any time;
- Ensure that staff have the equipment and training necessary to maintain health and safety in libraries e.g. hand washing facilities;
- Libraries should take note of PHA guidance for employers and employees (refer to Section 1)

Access to Library stock:

- Consider closing certain areas of the library, adopting a one way system and having alternative entry and exits;
- Consider limiting the number of staff in the library at any one time, alongside a time limit for borrowers;
- If a 'click and collect' approach is to be provided, consideration should be taken

on how long it will take to fulfil an order, and how many collection/return slots could be offered per week to ensure social distancing and staff safety. Increasing borrowing limits should be considered;

- Continue to promote online services to limit the number of visitors to the library building;
- It may be necessary to rearrange furniture or equipment, such as PCs, to ensure social distancing measures are complied with. You should take note of social distancing guidance (refer to Section 1)

Effective communications:

- Revised guidance, opening hours and services will need to be communicated to the public. In the gradual resumption of service, it is essential this is accompanied by the co-ordination of key messages on a to explain the reopening process, its limitations and how people will be expected to use libraries, in line with the current COVID-19 regulations and guidance in place;
- Libraries should publish appropriate information which details their plans to re-open safely. Options to consider include: Websites; Social Media; Customer Charter; Online catalogue; Posters with rules of behaviours and hygiene;
- Those libraries running events or exhibitions following the appropriate stage in the Pathway should take all necessary steps to ensure the safety of the public and prevent large gatherings or mass events from taking place. Social distancing guidance should be a key factor in all decisions.

Annex E - Local Archive Services

This additional advice applies to local archive services in Northern Ireland. The general principles in Sections 1-5 in this document apply to this sector, although it is recognised that there are some specific issues that need to be considered by those responsible for running local archive services.

Planning for re-opening

The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) has the statutory responsibility for the reception, preservation and provision of access to records created by government and public bodies in Northern Ireland (NI). PRONI also provides advice and guidance on archives and records management for the local sector. Unlike the rest of the United Kingdom (UK), there is not a network of county record offices; however, there are significant numbers of important local archival services who make a valuable contribution to the sector.

Local archive services hold documents, manuscripts and archives generated by local families, individuals, businesses and institutions, which together provide a unique and invaluable source of evidence for our local and national history. These archive services have traditionally welcomed the public and

professional researchers to visit and engage with the wide range of records in their care. As with other organisations in the culture and heritage sector, local archives should be planning a gradual and phased approach to re-opening, one which conforms to legal requirements and with NI Executive guidance.

Local archive services fulfil an important public role in collecting and caring for the documentary memory of the NI community. Initially, priority should be given to ensuring they are able to deal with official / legal enquiries as soon as possible, and then moving to providing a service for researchers as the next phase.

Events programming and educational services should be maintained on-line only until NI Executive regulations and guidelines allow such activities to proceed.

The National Archives (TNA) at Kew in London, fulfils a professional leadership role for the archive sector in England and Wales. It has developed a comprehensive guide for archive services as part of their planning for re-opening. Their guidance includes some useful principles and operational factors which would support the re-opening of local archive services in NI - see the TNA link below.

Special considerations

In addition to the list of considerations provided in Sections 4 and 5, there are some specific considerations relevant to the provision of archive services.

Particular consideration needs to be given to:

- While some collections are available on line, on a day-to-day basis, members of staff would normally interact with and provide professional support for the public as part of the archive's services;
- Arrangements for educational visits, events, and research services, which all require face-to-face interaction with people;
- Receiving and managing collections and conservation work - which require staff to be handling potentially contaminated materials. For receiving and handling collections / working with objects, you should refer to guidance in Annex A.

Useful links

These links are being provided as useful information only, and may refer to guidance produced outside of NI. You should always consider any information contained in these links within the context of the NI Executive legislation and guidance.

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/our-archives-sector-role/coronavirus-update/our-coronavirus-response-and-guidance/>

<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/publications-documents/In-the-Bubble-of-Our-Making-Reopening-the-Arts-in-Northern-Ireland-July-2020.pdf>

Annex F - Arts venues, including concert halls and theatres

The Department recognises that arts venues, concert halls and theatres vary significantly in nature, size and operation.

The general principles in Sections 1-5 in this document apply to this sector, although it is recognised that there are some issues that are specific to arts venues.

Planning for re-opening

When planning for re-opening, arts venues will need to be pro-active about working differently, acknowledging that re-opening cannot be about returning to the same management of facilities and of audiences as existed prior to lockdown.

Each venue will need to undertake its own assessment of how to implement the public safety guidance, noting that there will inevitably be a significant reduction to seating capacity. Most, if not all, will have to make significant physical and operational changes to the way that they provide access and manage how visitors move around their buildings whilst meeting social distancing requirements.

Many producers have already had to cancel or postpone work. None are yet in a position to confidently re book their future tours,

and it is likely to take several months post lockdown before touring productions or orchestras will be seen live on stage. Without a full programme of performances each week, reduced seating capacity and a reduction in other takings, some venues might conclude that it is not economically viable to open.

The timely resumption of production and performance will depend on the individual artists and freelancers who sustain the arts. Most in NI have had all of their work cancelled. Some will have been forced to seek other employment outside the creative industries. Re-engaging freelancers quickly, and in sufficient numbers, could therefore present an additional challenge.

Re-introducing school programmes and visits will require working closely with schools and education services and must be in line with guidelines.

Special considerations

In addition to the list of considerations provided in Sections 4 and 5, there are some specific considerations relevant to those who manage arts venues including:

Fabric of buildings:

- many arts venues are historic listed assets, old buildings or are of such a scale that they require regular and costly specialised care. A prolonged period of hibernation risks business critical deterioration of the fabric of buildings, the extent of which will only be realised as they reopen. There will be significant pressure on those providing equipment hire and contractor services. Theatres and concert halls are also subject to mandated safety checks. These issues must be factored into any plans for a safe re-opening;
- it will be necessary to ensure that any work equipment that was due to be inspected during the shutdown has been inspected, and that building and facilities maintenance is up to date

Cleaning and hygiene regimes:

- increased cleaning regimes should be implemented throughout the building, with a particular focus on preventing transmission via contaminated surfaces. Think about objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, such as counters, doorplates, handrails, ticket ATMs, cash registers, handheld devices etc. Implement enhanced cleaning for busy areas;
- schedule performances to allow staff time to undertake necessary cleaning before the next audience arrives;
- provide regular reminders and signage to maintain hygiene standards;
- provide hand sanitiser in multiple locations in addition to washrooms. If possible, provide hand sanitiser outside and encourage the public to use it before entering the building;

- arts Venues are likely to have changing facilities for performers. If the use of changing facilities is deemed necessary, consideration will need to be given to appropriate cleaning schedules as well as ensuring that social distancing measures can be adhered to

Social distancing:

- The implications of social distancing will be most venues' principal concern. Implementing social distancing will seriously affect venues' business models. This loss will be further exacerbated by lower merchandise sales. It is accepted that there is clearly a capacity below which it will be uneconomic for venues to re open, and it will therefore be for each venue to decide when re-opening becomes commercially viable;
- Backstage and the performance facilities need to be considered and only the appropriate number of performers can be backstage or on stage at any one time to ensure social/physical distancing can be adhered to. Any interaction between staff and musicians or audiences must be trained for, risk assessed and if necessary, PPE provided for all;
- The behaviour of audiences once at a venue will need to be considered. When programming and curating an exhibition, consider how long it takes an audience member to circulate, what is the dwell time for an area, how areas of higher interest are managed and how to distribute audience circulation and viewing times;
- where venues are licensed, you should take account of the impact of alcohol on adherence to social distancing and consider how this can be managed;

- you will need to consider the need for physical adaptations to your building, and how these adaptations could successfully safeguard your workforce, contractors and the public. Perspex screens, one way routes, signage for social distancing, equipment, ways of leaving and entering the building and managing potential queues internally and externally will be important aspects of your planning;
- Careful attention should be given to managing “touch” exhibits, including:
- headphones in sound installations - it might be necessary to offer bluetooth enabled touring guides on a phone. Any headphones provided for attendees would need to be thoroughly cleaned after every use;
- children’s interaction areas - consider seating areas e.g. benches, cushions etc, and/or encourage people to bring folding chairs

Programming, production and facilities

- matching the programme of activity to the particular requirements of each venue will need a bespoke approach. A key question will be the extent to which programming and production risks can be removed or mitigated;
- consider working co-operatively with other organisations and traditional competitors to mitigate the cost of producing work;
- consider the staging of work outdoors or in alternative spaces, if this can be made to work on a financially viable basis;
- touring events and companies will need to comply with the venue’s COVID-19 policies, and they should be made aware of these policies before their arrival at your venue;
- consider putting in place alternative strategies that avoid the need for walk-throughs, such as CAD drawings and

- technical specifications with images etc;
- ensure project delivery dates have sufficient contingency factored in as supply chains are likely to face disruption;
- consider the scale of the set or art installation, ensuring that production schedules take account of cleaning, staff orientation, and pre-event safety inspections
- consider creative approaches to performances to help with commercial viability. For example, a family-only performances could mean that social distancing measures in an auditorium will be different, allowing a larger percentage of seats to be occupied as those from same households will not need to distance from each other. You may want to consider trialling approaches undertaken by supermarkets during lockdown, allowing early daytime performances for clinically vulnerable groups. Outdoor performances, or drive-in events could also be viable where practicable

Bookings and cancellations

- organisations will want to consider whether they need alternative programming arrangements in place, in the event of elements of the planned programme falling through;
- plans and protocols will need to be in place in case events need to be cancelled or postponed. You should clarify the cancellation elements of your contracts;
- update ticketing information with terms and conditions for show cancellation and refund policy;
- revise venue rental contracts to consider cancellation policy;
- support and sustain existing links within the community. Consider how you can

create accessibility for COVID-19 vulnerable groups;

- consider how your booking systems could support track and trace activity in the event of an audience member, volunteer, or member of staff becoming unwell soon after being on premises

Staffing:

- where staff have been furloughed (or new staff are to be appointed), managers will need to plan for appropriate notice periods for their return to work;
- flexible training requirements will need to be put in place to bring staff up to speed on new ways of working. Managers will need to arrange training in a way which does not expose staff to high risk environments;
- safe staffing levels will need to be considered. The requirement to take all reasonable measures to ensure an adequate social distance is maintained between persons in line with social distancing guidance;
- ensure that staff have the equipment and training necessary to maintain health and safety in theatres e.g. hand washing facilities;
- theatres should take note of PHA guidance for employers and employees including front of house staff, back stage staff and for performers

Arts venues which operate as art galleries should also refer to Annex A.

Arts venues which operate as cinemas should also refer to Annex G.

Useful links

These links are being provided as useful information only, and may refer to guidance produced outside of NI. You should always consider any information contained in these links within the context of the NI legislation and guidance.

<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org>

https://www.theatreforum.ie/assets/uploads/Re-opening-Arts-Centres_Doc-v1.1.pdf

<https://www.accesscinema.ie/content/files/Reopening-of-Arts-Centres-Guidelines-Part-1-v1.1.pdf>

<https://www.accesscinema.ie/content/files/Reopening-of-Arts-Centres-Guidelines-Part-2-v1.1.pdf>

<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/publications-documents/In-the-Bubble-of-Our-Making-Reopening-the-Arts-in-Northern-Ireland-July-2020.pdf>

<https://www.musiciansunion.org.uk/Home/Advice/covid-19/Health-and-Safety-for-Live-Performance-Venues>

Annex G - Cinemas

This additional advice applies to all cinemas operating in NI. In some cases cinemas are located within mixed arts venues, in which case there will be a need to consider some of the measures suggested in Annex F. There may also be additional requirements for cinemas located in retail centres, and managers will need to work with others to ensure a consistent approach to public safety.

The general principles and guidance detailed in Sections 1-5 are relevant to the sector, but it is recognised that there are a number of specific issues that need to be considered.

Planning for re-opening

When planning for re-opening, cinemas will need to be pro-active about working differently, acknowledging that management of facilities and of audiences will initially need to be very different to the arrangements that existed prior to lockdown. It is expected that the cinemas will reopen if they are compliant with social distancing guidelines. Drive in cinemas have already been established in advance of cinema openings.

Each venue will need to undertake its own assessment of how to implement the public safety guidance, noting that, while social distancing measures are in place, there will inevitably be a significant reduction to seating capacity.

Comprehensive guidelines have been developed by the UK Cinema Association (see links below), and cinemas in NI should refer to these whilst always complying with the broader regulations and guidance in NI relating to COVID-19. The guidelines recognise the broad range of different site layouts and business models which exist in cinemas.

Each cinema should consider not just its own building but its supply chain and the local environment when reviewing its safeguarding strategy. Protocols will need to be developed at each venue for handling deliveries safely and for working with external contractors.

Special considerations

In addition to the guidance provided in Section 4, there are a number of specific considerations that apply to cinema settings.

Staff:

- where staff have been furloughed (or new staff are to be appointed), managers will need to plan for appropriate notice periods for their return to work;
- flexible training requirements will need to be put in place to bring staff up to speed on new ways of working - managers will need to arrange training in a way which does not expose staff to high risk environments;
- minimum safe staffing levels will need to be considered against a new backdrop of potential levels of infection and repeated isolation requests

Bookings:

- managing audience numbers will be critical in supporting social distancing and understanding potential pressure points in advance;
- as part of a phased re-opening, cinemas should implement ways of working which allow them to plan for social distancing. Those who are not currently supported by automated on-line booking systems should consider implementing telephone or email bookings;
- consider how your booking systems could support track and trace activity in the event of an audience member, volunteer, or member of staff becoming unwell soon after being on premises;
- working differently by considering creative approaches to screening could help with commercial viability. For example, family-only screenings could mean that social distancing measures in an auditorium will be different, allowing a larger percentage of seats to be occupied as those from same households will not need to distance from each other. You may want to consider trialling approaches undertaken by supermarkets during lockdown, allowing early daytime screenings for clinically vulnerable groups. Outdoor screenings, or drive-in events could also be viable where practicable

Managing queues and moving around the building:

- you must consider the need for physical adaptations to your building, and how these adaptations could successfully support your workforce, contractors and the public. Perspex screens, one way routes, signage for social distancing, equipment, ways of leaving and entering

the building and managing potential queues internally and externally will be important aspects of your planning

Refreshments and catering:

- you will need to ensure that you comply with current regulations on restaurants, bars and cafes

Events and parties:

- it is not recommended that cinemas re-instate events and parties in the early phases of re-opening;
- events and parties should not be held without strict social distancing measures in place and must comply with all NI guidance

Supply chains:

- cinemas should consider and implement appropriate handling protocols for deliveries and for working with any on-site contractors.

Cleaning and hygiene regimes:

In addition to the measures suggested in section 4 above, consider:

- implementing increased cleaning regimes throughout the building, with a particular focus on preventing transmission via contaminated surfaces. Consider objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, such as counters, doorplates, handrails, ticket ATMs, cash registers, handheld devices etc. Implement enhanced cleaning for busy areas;
- scheduling screenings to allow staff time to undertake necessary cleaning before the next audience arrives;
- using signs and posters to build awareness of good hygiene, including handwashing techniques and frequency, the need to avoid

- touching your face, and to cough or sneeze into a tissue which should be binned safely;
- providing regular reminders and signage to maintain hygiene standards;
 - providing hand sanitiser in multiple locations in addition to washrooms. If possible, provide hand sanitiser outside and encourage the public to use it before entering the building

Cinemas which operate as part of arts venues should also refer to Annex F.

Useful links

These links are being provided as useful information only, and may refer to guidance produced outside of NI. You should always

consider any information contained in these links within the context of NI legislation and guidance.

UK Cinema Association working safely during Covid-19 in cinemas.

<https://www.accesscinema.ie/content/files/Reopening-of-Arts-Centres-Guidelines-Part-1-v1.1.pdf>

<https://www.accesscinema.ie/content/files/Reopening-of-Arts-Centres-Guidelines-Part-2-v1.1.pdf>

<https://www.accesscinema.ie/content/files/Reopening-of-Arts-Centres-Guidelines-Part-3-v1.1.pdf>

Annex H - Guidance for Heritage and Conservation Specialists and their Employers/Clients

General Guidance

In relation to heritage and conservation specialists, the **guidance in relation to construction sites** may apply including, in the case of archaeology, advice available from the **Chartered Institute for Archaeologists**. Particular consideration should be given to working on or visiting sites where health and safety is managed by clients or their agents: the heritage specialist should ensure that the third-party risk assessment and safe system of work are adequate and consistent with their own before entering the site or building. On heritage sites, working areas may well be more constrained, e.g. in excavation trenches or in roof spaces.

Equipment to aid restoration, repair and alteration activity may not always be practical in such sites, so more people may need to be in the same space to carry out specific actions, such as replacing heavy structural beams. Each activity needs to be carefully considered, including thinking about how it might best be delivered. Considerations may also include the need for adequate PPE where it is not possible to keep an appropriate

distance from others, although planning should start from the premise of meeting the required social distancing. Work practices may need to be modified, while remaining within existing HSENI requirements. Many activities are likely to be possible with appropriate consideration and flexible thinking about safe delivery.

Careful documentation as part of the risk assessment process of the risks and training of staff will be important to avoid high risk situations. Where site inspections or other heritage work are temporarily carried out by only one person instead of a team, lone-working guidance should be followed and can be found **here**.

Encouraging the public to observe heritage specialists undertaking their work, such as carrying out excavations or conserving historic wall paintings, is an important way of helping them to better understand and appreciate heritage. Careful assessment of the risks of allowing the public to access such work spaces will be necessary, and where risks are identified, alternative approaches must be adopted, e.g. live streaming to a less constrained space, installing temporary clear screens, or using social media to share what is going on.

Archaeological Excavations

All searches for archaeological material in Northern Ireland which involve ground disturbance must be carried out under a licence issued by Historic Environment Division of the Department for Communities.

All such excavations carried out during the COVID-19 restrictions must comply with NI Executive regulations and advice. Of particular relevance are those relating to:

- social distancing - travelling to and from the excavation; while working on site and while using site facilities such as site huts, offices, canteens and cleaning facilities etc;
- regular hand washing - site facilities should include sufficient amounts of water and soap/sanitiser, washing facilities for the number of excavators;

- protective equipment - access to disposable gloves and face covering should the need arise - for example when handling/ packaging finds, samples etc and if social distancing is temporarily not possible

Specific requirements in relation to artefacts (including soil and environmental samples) should broadly comply with those for museums (Annex A). These include:

- minimising handling of artefacts, and continuing to assess and revise your approach as restrictions ease;
- social distancing and hand washing arrangements before and after handling collections;
- use of disposable plastic gloves;
- use of non-medical grade face mask or face covering to avoid aerosol contamination of collection items;
- removal and disposal of PPE in accordance with your company protocols

Available in alternative formats

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